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ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥



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IDEAS AND LOVE FOR GOD

Vol. 46

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No. 5

Puruṣaṁ Purāṇam

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराण-

स्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।

वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम

त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥

"You are the primal deity, the most ancient person; You are the ultimate resort of the universe; You are the knower, the knowable and the Supreme Abode. This universe is pervaded by you, O Being of infinite forms."

—Gītā (XI. 38)



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Ānanda or Bliss

—*Brahmalina Sri Jayadayal Goyandka*

Ānanda or Bliss is the state of infinite, imperishable transcendent, unsurpassable, supreme joy,—the state where there is total negation of both distraction and misery.

The Lord says—

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद् बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम्।
वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः॥
यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः।
यस्मिन् स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते॥

(*Gītā* VI. 21-22)

“The state in which the soul experiences the eternal and supersensuous joy which can be apprehended only through subtle and acute reason, and wherein established the *Yogī* moves not from truth, and having obtained which he does not reckon any other gain as greater than that, and established in which he is not moved even by great sorrow.”

The practice lies in concentrating on the thought that God is total Bliss, unsurpassable Bliss, quiet Bliss, solid Bliss, unshakable Bliss, stable Bliss, eternal Bliss, Bliss in the form of knowledge, Bliss in the form of wisdom, Supreme Bliss, great Bliss, even Bliss, inconceivable Bliss and infinite Bliss.

Identity of Sat, Cit, Ānanda—

The marks of *Brahma*, stated above as *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda*, are not the qualities of *Brahma*, as distinguished from *Brahma*. Nor is *Brahma* the substratum of those qualities; for *Brahma* is above the qualities. Therefore, those

marks are said to be the inherent marks of *Brahma*, the synonyms of *Brahma*; for that which is *Sat* is verily *Cit*, and that which is *Cit* is verily *Sat*; and that which is *Sat* is verily *Ānanda*, and that which is *Ānanda* is verily *Sat*; and that which is *Cit* is verily *Ānanda* and that which is *Ānanda* is verily *Cit*.

Brahma has been described as *Sat*, because He is ever existent, and can never be negated. This is proved by the experience of saints. Though the entire world, including mind, ceases to exist in the mind of the saint, *Brahma*, the embodiment of *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda*, remains. He is called *Cit* or consciousness, because He does not stand in the relation of object to anything, and even the subtlest traces of matter exist not in Him, and He is the knower of Himself. And because there is total absence of misery in Him, and He is supreme Peace and supreme Joy, He has been described as *Ānanda* or Bliss.

The knower of worldly happiness is different from it; this happiness is not conscious of itself, hence it is a material form of happiness. But the knower of the Bliss of *Brahman* is not different from *Brahma*. That self-existent Bliss knows itself; in other words, that Bliss is the same as *Jñāna* or consciousness. *Cit* or consciousness, is not something different from that Bliss. Like worldly happiness, Bliss is not subject to origin and end, growth and decay; that is why it is a state above all modifications. *Sat* or Existence, is not a different state from this. The very existence of Bliss is indicative of the principle of Existence; From that Existence of God, *Cit* or consciousness also is not something different; that Existence (*Sat*) itself is consciousness (*Cit*), and consciousness is Existence. Hence Existence is not different from consciousness. The word *Sat* has been used in order to indicate the existence of Consciousness, so that none can ever imagine its negation.

'Consciousness exists'—this statement does not make consciousness and Existence two different things. In order to indicate the presence of consciousness, the statement is made that consciousness exists. Similarly, the statement that 'Bliss exists' does not make Bliss and Existence two different things. The statement only indicates the presence of Bliss. Even so, the word *Vijñānānanda* should not make one regard wisdom and Bliss as two different things; for as in the case of worldly happiness, there is no separate knower of Bliss. Bliss indicates a kind of joy totally different from worldly happiness, devoid of all taints of Matter, and conscious of itself. In other words, Bliss is the same as knowledge. *Jñāna* or knowledge, is not anything different from Bliss; that is to say, knowledge itself is Bliss, and Bliss being neither its attribute nor qualification, it is called *Vijñānānanda*.

The conception of God formed in the mind from the above explanation of the terms *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda*, is a conception formed only by the intellect. The *Gītā* describes it as "Supersensuous joy apprehended only through subtle and acute reason" (VI. 21). The *Kāthopaniṣad* also says—

एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोत्मा न प्रकाशते ।

दृश्यते त्वग्रया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥

(I. 3. 12)

"The self hidden in the heart of all beings is not revealed to all. Sages possessed of keen intelligence alone see it with the help of their sharp and acute reason."

The real form of God is exceptionally different from whatever one may understand to be God's form with the help of one's intellect. The real, indescribable form of God is realized only through direct knowledge of that embodiment of *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda*. It is called also the realization of absolute *Brahma*, or the realization of Supreme *Brahma*.



Anxiety

—Swami Ramsukhdas

There is no need for anxiety to maintain the body, but what happens after separation from the body—it is very necessary to worry about.

Whatever has to happen, will happen and whatever is not to be, would never be. Then what is the worry about?

We need nothing for ourselves, for our own self lacks nothing. Whatever the body needs, is ordained according to one's fate. Then why worry about anything?

God makes arrangements for our subsistence, but not for enjoyment. Therefore, have no anxiety for subsistence nor desire for enjoyment.

Whatever God does, or will do, in that lies my good. Believing in this, irrespective of circumstances, one should remain free from worry.

There is no unhappiness or worry due to shortage of things, but foolishness is the cause. That is removed by association with perfected souls.

When a man gives up worry about his own body, by and by the world starts worrying about his body.

Living with faith in God, eliminates worry of all kinds.

By doing what should not be done and not doing what must be done, causes anxiety and fear.

God knows better than us, is more competent and more compassionate than ourselves. So why should we worry?



Unto Bliss

—Nityalilalina Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar

Remember—those who are filthy within and seek to cover up the filth with external ornamentation, their filth does not lessen, on the contrary it increases, nor can they save themselves from the evil effects of the internal filth. True good is derived only when the internal filth is eradicated.

Remember—if your mind is full of evils like lust, anger, malice, jealousy and violence etc., and you make no effort to remove them, and their presence does not appear disagreeable to you, but externally you are loud in instructing others about disinterestedness, sacrifice, seeing good in others, love and the spirit of service, what do you gain thereby? It will lead only to the growth of hypocrisy.

Remember—if outwardly people fail to detect any merit in you, but your heart is faultless and pure, you are truly pure. Indeed, he alone is pure and good, who is pure before God, who is faultless in the eye of God.

Remember—whatever words you utter about devotion, love and knowledge, are indeed, valueless, if your heart lacks attachment to God (devotion), the nectarean and disinterested sweetness of love, and the transcendent light of knowledge. Be a devotee in your heart, feel the spring of love within you, and kindle the light of knowledge within. Then alone you will derive true benefit from them.

Remember—external ostentation, though grand and great, cannot be compared with even the smallest amount of truthfulness in thought. Create this truthful spirit. Truthfulness, however small, will conduce to the greatest good—for it is true and genuine.



A Critique of the Vedas in the Gītā

—Dr. P. P. Sharma

The *Vedas* are supposed to be the exhalations or emanations from the godhead. That is why they are held in such profound reverence. Their authority has never been questioned. As scriptures they are absolutely sacrosanct. They however cannot but suffer, be it ever so little, in comparison with the source of their being, where they originated. Between the *Vedas* and Śrī Kṛṣṇa to whom shall the devout owe a stronger allegiance? This question should not be dismissed either as a silly speculation or the product of heterodox thinking. The Lord himself affirms that He is seated in everybody's heart and from Him arises memory, wisdom and reasoning which eliminates all doubt and confusion (*Apohanam*). "All the *Vedas* are just a means by which I become known. I am the knower of the *Vedas*; it is I who have created the last part of the *Vedas* (*Vedānta*) (XV. 15). This section characterized by *Jñāna*, as is well known, stands in contrast to the *Brāhmaṇas* replete with ritualistic actions.

An author surely recognizes the merit of his work even at the mundane level, or else why did he put himself to the trouble of bringing it forth? There is definitely a very positive side to the *Vedas*. They elaborate upon a whole range of *Yajñas* (sacrifices) and instruct mankind that all action apart from that of *Yajña* is a bondage. They build a bridge between the celestial beings (*Devas*) and men to promote mutual benefits. The *Gītā* states that after creating the creatures along with the *Yajñas* the Lord proclaimed in the past that "You procreate yourselves (through your

progeny of hero sons) and they (the sacrifices) will be the mythical cows to fulfil your desires." *Prajāpati* further declares that you sustain or foster the gods and they will make you thrive or prosper. Thus through mutual sustenance you will achieve the highest good (III. 10-11). Pleased or satisfied with the sacrifice the gods will confer on you the necessary requisites (III. 12). The *Yajñas* are recommended for their practical efficacy and utility. They are very clearly result-oriented. This view however, was promulgated in the remote past 'पुर'. Moreover, the *Gītā* simply quotes *Prajāpati* in this context. What is the stand of the *Gītā* on this matter? Does it disparage or discourage the performance of sacrifice? Far from it.

यज्ञदानतपः कर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत्।
 यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम्॥
 एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च।
 कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम्॥

(*Gītā* XVIII. 5-6)

The activities of sacrifice, austerity and giving in charity should not be given up. They are the purifiers of the wise. After stripping them from attachment and fruits they are very well worth doing O' Arjuna, this is my excellent considered view. Thus declares Kṛṣṇa in his own voice. Is not what the Lord is saying here far weightier in substance than what appears in *Prajāpatis'* quoted words? One of the most cardinal teachings of the *Gītā* is to work for the welfare of the world in a purely detached spirit without the faintest hint of any craving for a material benefit. This message of the Lord is clearly writ large all over this scripture. It would therefore be puerile to quote one verse from here and one from there to substantiate this. This being the case, how shall we evaluate *Prajāpati's* words. Kṛṣṇa's words and those of *Prajāpati* do not chime in with each other. Actually,

there is an unmistakable discord between them.

In *Ślokas* 41—46 of Ch. II what can be called a critique of the *Vedas* is made available. Those who have a resolute will follow one course while those lacking in it will wander through endless labyrinths (branches). “बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च”. There are the unlearned or ignorant who are for ever discoursing on the *Vedas*, declaring that there is nothing except these hankering after heaven (स्वर्ग) concerned with their personal benefits and speaking flowery language (probably to distract the *Sādhakas* from the right course). They dwell on the various activities which will grant enjoyment and prosperity. They are so infatuated by these material acquisitions that they have completely lost their wits. How can such persons ever enter into communion with the Divine?

A couple of points deserve to be noted here. Criticism is directed against the portion of the *Vedas* designated as *Brāhmaṇas* which contain prayers and supplications to a large number of deities, like Indra, Varuṇa, Agni. Exaggerated importance is given to rituals on the fulfilment of which handsome rewards are promised. The supreme good is one's sojourn in heaven. There is a prescribed way to secure almost everything that one desires. The experts who treat of these religious texts are really ignorant who have cultivated a style of literary finesse. Now these are serious charges. In the *Gītā* itself these facile assumptions of a good and successful life are repudiated. Heaven cannot be regarded as the supreme good. After one's *Puṇyas* are exhausted one is hurled back into the woeful mortal world. Rituals often are an external exercise. Ignorance on the part of the so called experts is an unforgivable deficiency as the aphorism “ज्ञानदेव तु कैवल्यम्” implies. How far we are from “Be good, do good and see good” in the arid world of ‘कर्मकाण्ड’ can be anybody's guess.

Things acquire a more vivid focus in the *Ślokas* 45, 46

and 47. The three *Guṇas* have their area of influence in the material world (*Prakṛti*) and so also in the *Vedas*. Instead of succumbing to them one should keep oneself free from them. One should arrive at non-duality, be permanently established in oneself, without caring to acquire and preserve and be self-possessed. For the enlightened the value of the *Vedas* is indeed very limited like that of a puddle when the place is flooded with water. The whole issue is clinched thus: "Your right is only in action, never in the result. Never be prompted by the motive or fruit, neither should you be attached to inaction. There has to be action without any desire for fruit."

The seeming uncomplimentary references to the *Vedas* have for their referent the *Samhitās* (hymns) and the *Brāhmaṇa* portions and not the *Upaniṣads*. When the *Buddhi* or intellect crosses the delusion it has no need of the *Vedas*—"तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च" (II. 52). In the *Śloka* 53 yet another indictment is brought against the *Vedas*. They only make people bewildered "श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना" as they do not provide a means to the highest wisdom. As they are many branched, the *Buddhi* keeps darting to and fro, running in different directions after the goals of enjoyment and power which they are supposed to promote. All this in complete contradiction to the basic teaching of the *Gītā*.

To the question whether the Lord would vouchsafe His *Darśana* to those who have studied the *Vedas*, or practised charity or performed ritualistic actions or engaged in rigorous austerities the answer is direct and unmistakable.

न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैर्न दानै-

र्न च क्रियाभिर्न तपोभिरुग्रैः।

एवं रूपः शक्य अहं नृलोके

द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर॥

(XI. 48)

The kind of 'विश्वरूप दर्शन' that Arjuna was blessed with

is beyond the reach of these physical external exercises. The teaching of the *Gītā* concerning 'निष्काम कर्म' is at variance with what the 'कर्मकाण्ड' of the *Brāhmaṇas* stands for. This is a truth which the traditionalists in all fairness to the *Gītā* must not hesitate to accept.



वेदोऽधीतश्चरितं ब्रह्मचर्यं
यज्ञैरिष्टं ब्राह्मणेभ्यश्च दत्तम्।
परं स्थानं मन्यमानेन भूय
आत्मा दत्तो वर्षपूगं सुखेभ्यः॥

"Thou hast studied the *Vedas*, lived the life of a saintly Brahman, hast performed sacrificial rites, made charities to *Brāhmaṇas*. Even remembering the highest position (attainable by beings), thou hast also devoted thy soul for years and years to the pursuit of pleasure."

—*Mahābhārata, Udyogaparva (XXVII.7)*

"He walks with me, He talks with me, He tells me I am His own." He loves everyone of you. He loves you. Believe it! Turn to Him! Each of us has a silent temple within where we can go, unknown to anyone around us, and talk to Him: "O my Lord, You are with me. O my Lord, I love You! I may not always understand You, but You are mine. You gave me life. I am Yours. Bless me that I can look after my family and fulfil my responsibilities. Give me the strength, wisdom and joy with which to serve. I know, my Lord, that it is you who came with me into this world, and it is You alone who will be with me when I go; so above all, my greatest responsibility is to love You, but without forsaking the responsibilities and loved ones You have given to me."

—*Self-Realization*

Om (The Sacred Praṇava)

—M. S. Patel

In the beginning was the word,
And the word was with God,
And the word was god.

—The Bible

From the *Ṛgveda*
To the millennium dawn
The stream of consciousness
Flowing and flowing ceaselessly.

Hark! the eternal echo
The cosmic sound
Vibrating in the ether
Om Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!! Śāntiḥ!!!

Erect the antenna
To catch the sound
The invocation beckons
From eternity.

Thou art the Trinity,
Brahmā! Viṣṇu!! Śiva!!!
Thou art the *Vedas*
The *Ṛg!* the *Yajus!!* the *Sāma!!!*

Thou art the prologue
And the epilogue
Epitome of the *Upaniṣads*
And the kernel of the *Vedas*.

O ! Universal men
Know the syllables
Meditate on this divine form
To behold the macrocosm.

Chant this sacred word
The mystic *Mantra*
The occult doctrine
To perceive the cosmic vision.

Thou art the Alpha and Omega
The ladder to *Nirvāṇa*
The cradle of this universe
Om Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ !! Śāntiḥ!!!



Why a Person Commits Sin?

—R. S. Agarwal

A person commits sin on account of uncontrolled desires for enjoyment of sensuous pleasures. A constant agitation of mind to get some agreeable thing is desire. Several obstacles come in the fulfilment of desire due to which wrath, anger arises. The rational and discriminating capacity of angry person is choked as fire by smoke, mirror by dust. The desire, anger, emotion compel us to disregard our higher known values of existence and tempt us to perpetuate sins for the fulfilment of desires. Once desire has come to manifest itself in the intellect it enshrouds the wisdom. Immoral and unethical instincts are developed. Our discriminating capacity is screened off due to our greedy desires, which are insatiable. More and more sins are committed to enjoy the desires but these grow more as fire by pouring of ghee into it.

(*Gītā* III. 37—39)

In this world there are two distinct paths—one is good (श्रेय) while the other is pleasant (प्रेय). Blessed is he who between them chooses the good alone. The path of pleasant abducts the pursuer into sensuous pleasures for which he commits crimes and sins and thereby enropes himself for a long lease of painful existence in lower wombs after death. The intelligent man prefers the good to the pleasant but the ignorant man chooses the pleasant for the sake of his body and satisfying demands of ever craving senses. He stoops low, to commit sins and cruelties as a result of which he reaches the gruesome state of eternal death in the lower scale of evaluation.

(*Kaṭhōpaniṣad* I. 2.1-2)

Truth is stainless yet individuals behave as sinners, criminals because their mind and intellect are stained due to desires, lust, attachment. The life force that runs through every name and form is one and the same but according to the constitution of the individual mind and intellect the different personalities manifest as criminals, sinners or saints. The same electricity cools the room through cooler and heats the room through heater. The same electricity freezes water in a refrigerator and boils water in geezer. If by consistent pursuit, we can revolutionise our mind to modify its constitution through a process of diligent self-discipline and right understanding even the worst of sinner can be transformed into best. Every sinner has a bright glorious future said Rāmakṛṣṇa.

Due to ignorance and lack of proper wisdom, the dreamy cravings of flesh enchant persons away from their glory and make them run down the channels of sensuousness to wreck on the stormy bed of sin. The insatiable thirst for pleasures polluted by sensuality leads to relentless pursuit for worldly pleasures, which inducts the individual to commit sin. The more an individual pants for self-gratification through sense indulgences, the more he becomes a sinner.

After being born as a human being one should follow the path of knowledge, renunciation, devotion, meditation. Those who are not mature enough to follow this path are advised intense selfless activity for the welfare of all. Those who fail to follow either path are slayers of their own souls. To fulfil their unending desires for sensuous pleasures they commit various sins making their present and future lives very dark and terrible.

(*Īśāvāsyopaniṣad* 3)

Performance of obligatory duties by a person living in society is a must even if it involves sufferings and hardship. By ignoring them a man incurs great sin. If a soldier fighting

on the front, a judge deciding cases do not sincerely and honestly perform their duty for any ulterior motive incur great sin. Although stress has been laid on non-violence and non-injury to others it does not mean that a murderer should be acquitted by the judge or soldier should lay down his arms on the front because of the principles of non-violence and non-injury to others. No sin accrues to the judge in awarding punishment to the murderer because he is doing so in discharge of the duties entrusted to him and is acting without any selfish motive. On the contrary if he lets off the murderer for any consideration he incurs big sin. The motive behind the action is therefore the determining factor whether the particular action is a sin or virtue. Some persons who have lost the faculty of correctly determining whether an action is right or wrong incorrectly considers the right action as wrong and wrong action as right. They incur big sin by doing prohibited action and ignoring obligatory duties. The biggest enemies who destroy the discriminative capacity are intoxicant drugs, alcohol etc. This discriminative capacity of drug addicts is completely spoiled and they commit sinful acts. An inebriated person becomes worse than a brute. He even fails to realise the difference between his wife, daughter, sister etc. In such state to what extent he can commit gruesome and heinous crimes hardly need to be described. Unless he controls his desire to drink, he becomes a liability and blot not only to his near and dear but also to the society. While drunk he commits violence and all sorts of sins.

The greatest cause of incurring sins is thus desire, which includes attachment also. A person who is contented and free from desires enjoys the maximum joy and happiness. According to *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II. 8) the bliss of a person who studied the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads* and experienced the theme indicated therein and entertains no more desires for

the decaying finite objects is equal to the bliss enjoyed by *Brahman*. The joys of an educated, well disciplined, mentally resolute and physically strong man who possesses the whole world and its wealth as his own is one unit. This goes on multiplying 100 times in the case of Human, *Gandharvas*, *Deva Gandharvas*, Manes, native gods, special gods, office bearer gods, Indra, *Br̥haspati*, *Prajāpati*, *Brahmā*. Thus the bliss of *Brahman* is 100 billion billion joy units. This joy of *Brahman* has been equated with the joy of one who is free from desires. What a tribute for the desireless. He not only lives in complete contentment and tranquillity but also is saved from incurring any sin. The person whose desires have ceased is not a dead man but he has risen from the lower levels of life to loftier heights. It may be cautioned here that the person must get rid of desires but not from obligatory duties. He must continue performing his duties without attachment and expectation of fruit. If he abandons duties he incurs great sin. Intelligent distinction should be made between desires to be renounced but not duties that ought to be performed with full sincerity and best of ability to achieve the aim of human life. Such person dwells in calm and ceaseless contemplation while his body and mind actively discharge his duties. Pleasure or pain, gain or loss, success or failure, honour or dishonour do not affect him.



वेदोऽखिलो धर्ममूलं स्मृतिशीले च तद्विदाम्।

आचारश्चैव साधूनामात्मनस्तुष्टिरेव च॥

"All *Vedas*, the *Smṛtis* of well versed Vedic scholars and their good conducts, the norms followed by the noble and finally self-satisfaction—are the root of *Dharma*."

—*Manusmṛti* (II. 6)

Sanatsujātīya

Dhṛtarāṣṭra—

1. O Sanatsujāta! What you have said about *Brahman* is very important and comprehensive (*Viśvarūpa*). Please therefore tell me also about the other transcendental matters which are rarely spoken about.

Sanatsujāta—

2. O king! This *Brahman* you are urging me to speak about cannot be realized by one who is impatient. The wisdom which arises when the intellect is completely quiescent and the mind entirely free from thoughts is attained by living with a realized sage and observing celibacy (*Brahmacarya*).

3. You are talking about the primal and true wisdom which is attained by the virtuous through *Brahmacarya*. On attaining it one turns away from the world of men. This wisdom is generally found in those who have learnt it from *Gurus*.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra—

4. O wise man! Please tell me what is that *Brahmacarya* through which this wisdom is properly acquired.

Sanatsujāta—

5. Those who go to the *Ācārya* (*Guru* or teacher) and, are accepted by him as his disciples, practise *Brahmacarya* and become authors of scriptural works (*Śāstrakāra*). And when they leave their bodies they attain the Supreme Being.

6. They conquer their desires and wait patiently to realize *Brahman*. They clearly understand that the Self is not the body and detach it just as one extracts the pith of the *Isika* reed from its outer layers.

7. Father and mother bring only this body into existence. The birth which one takes from the *Ācārya* is the true and immortal birth.

8. He (the *Guru*) protects (the disciple) and makes him immortal. The disciple should not, therefore, knowingly transgress against him. He should salute the *Guru* daily. He should be eager to learn from him and be always attentive.

9. The learning acquired by following the conduct prescribed for disciples is pure (beneficial). This is said to be the first quarter of *Brahmacarya* (course of study).

10. The disciple should conduct himself towards the *Ācārya's* wife and children exactly as he would towards the *Ācārya*. This is the second quarter.

11. He should always remember what the *Ācārya* has done for him, recognize its value, feel that he has been fortunate in having him for his *Ācārya* and be grateful to him. This is the third quarter of *Brahmacarya*.

12. He should please the *Ācārya* with his body, mind and speech, giving up even his life and property, if necessary. This is the fourth quarter.

13. One quarter is gained by coming to the *Guru*, another by intelligent perseverance, a third by studying the scriptures and a fourth in course of time.

14. The twelve good qualities such as wisdom and the other requisites and strength (of mind) yield results only when one comes into contact with the *Ācārya*. *Brahmacarya* becomes fruitful when one realizes union with *Brahman*.

15-16. The *Devas* attained their celestial status through *Brahmacarya*. The sages (*Ṛṣis*) became eminent through *Brahmacarya*. The *Apsarās* living with the *Gandharvas* became beautiful through *Brahmacarya*. The sun illumines the world by virtue of *Brahmacarya*.

17. Just as one attains one's desires with the help of the wish fulfilling gem (*Cintāmaṇi*), so also they attained

their present status by first realizing the value of *Brahmacarya*.

18. But they attained only worlds which are finite, not the self, which is infinite. The wise attain that Eternal Effulgence through wisdom. There is no other way of attaining it.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra—

19. A Brahmin of spiritual attainments sees within himself the colours white, red, black, silvery and bluish. Which of these is the colour of the immortal and imperishable Supreme Being?

Sanatsujāta—

20. It is neither white nor red, nor black nor silvery nor bluish. It is not found on earth nor in the sky, nor is it found in the waters of the ocean.

21-22. It is not found in the stars or the lightning or the clouds or the air or the gods governing the sense-organs or the sun or the moon or the *Ṛgveda* or the *Yajurveda* or the holy *Sāmaveda* or the *Rathantara* or the *Bṛhadraṭha*. It is realized within oneself by him who practises great austerities.

23. It is not possible to transcend it. It is beyond darkness (ignorance). Everything finally enters into it at the time of destruction (of the worlds). It is tinier than the tiniest and bigger than the mountains.

24. Everything shines in its effulgence. The knower of the Self perceives it by the *Yoga* of knowledge (*Jñāna Yoga*). The entire world is based on It. Those who realize this become immortal.

Courtesy—*The Mountain Path*



Renunciation

(Teachings of Maharṣi Ramaṇa)

Devotee: I am inclined to give up my job and remain always with *Śrī Bhagavān*.

Bhagavān: *Bhagavān* is always with you, in you. The Self in you is *Bhagavān*. It is that you should realise.

Devotee: But I feel the urge to give up all attachments and renounce the world as a *Saṁnyāsin*.

Bhagavān: Renunciation does not mean outward divestment of clothes and so on or abandonment of home. True renunciation is the renunciation of desires, passions and attachments.

Devotee: But single-minded devotion to God may not be possible unless one leaves the world.

Bhagavān: No, one who truly renounces actually merges in the world and expands his love to embrace the whole world. It would be more correct to describe the attitude of the devotee as universal love than as abandoning home to don the ochre robe.

Devotee: At home the bonds of affection are too strong.

Bhagavān: He who renounces when he is not yet ripe for it only creates new bonds.

Devotee: Is not renunciation the supreme means of breaking attachments?

Bhagavān: It may be so for one whose mind is already free from entanglements. But you have not grasped the deeper import of renunciation. Great soul who have abandoned the life of the world have done so not out of aversion to family life but because of their large hearted and all embracing love for all mankind and all creatures.

Devotee: The family ties will have to go sometime so why shouldn't take the initiative and break them now so that my love can be equal to all?

Bhagavān: When you really feel that equal love for all, when your heart has so expanded as to embrace the whole of creation, you will certainly not feel like giving up this or that: you will simply drop off from secular life as a ripe fruit does from the branch of a tree. You will feel that the whole world is your home.

—*Courtesy—M. L. Chhibber*



बयरु अकारन सब काहू सों । जो कर हित अनहित ताहू सों ॥
झूठइ लेना झूठइ देना । झूठइ भोजन झूठ चबेना ॥
बोलहिं मधुर बचन जिमि मोरा । खाइ महा अहि हृदय कठोरा ॥

"They bear enmity towards all without rhyme or reason; nay they behave inimically even with those who are actively kind to them. They are false in their dealings (lying is their stock-in-trade); nay, falsehood is their dinner and falsehood their breakfast. They speak honeyed words just like the peacock, that has a stony heart and devours the most venomous snake."

—*Mānasa* (VII.38.3-4)

Instead of living an uncontrolled existence, blown about by the winds of seemingly capricious fate, you can live a controlled existence by which you can schedule your life and make it yield what it should yield; an expansion of consciousness that unfolds in all-round development of the divine potentials within you....

—*Paramahansa Yogananda*

The Secret of Success

—*His Holiness Sri Bhola Nathji Maharaj*

Each one of us has a soul. The soul is distinct from the body. When I go into deep sleep I lose consciousness of the body. Upon awakening, I say "I slept soundly." There is something which is 'I' apart from the body. 'I' am not the body alone. Soul is distinct from matter. Modern science has not been able to see the soul. Some other instrument is required for seeing the soul and that instrument must be very delicate. How to know the 'Knower'? All *Mahātmās* and founders of religions have said that the soul exists. The most that atheists have said is: "We do not know any such thing as the 'soul'; but it may be, we do not know it." There are many things that we do not know. Do we deny their existence altogether? Have we attempted to find out the 'Soul'? If not, then ask those who have made the attempt.

The goal of every drop of water is the ocean. Observe the dew-drops. We see drops of water on the grass in the morning. By ten O' clock, when the sun is shining, the drops have evaporated into the air. Wind takes them into higher regions or near mountains. The drops come down in the form of rain, through canals and rivers, and they seek to go back into the ocean unless they are taken up for some use again. Their goal is the ocean. Again, a flame rises skywards. Its goal is the sun. There must be a goal for the human soul. That goal is the Almighty. Each one of us has to reach that goal. Every visible object of this world is trembling, shaking or restless. We expect to

find peace and rest in one pursuit now and in another later on. But everyone of these pursuits gives one lesson. 'Peace' is elsewhere. A moth is longing for a lamp. The moment the lamp is lighted, it knows its goal. How does it know? Its 'heart' guides the moth. Similarly the heart of man is his true guide. This is faith. The next step is realization. The moth seeks union with the flame. For obtaining union it has to make a struggle, to be up and doing, towards its goal. Have we made the effort? There will be no lasting peace until we have reached our goal. Ask the saints or *Mahātmās*, who have reached the destination themselves, to help you with the 'Secret of Success' and of success for all time.

A king once held a fancy fair for his favourite courtiers and attendants. Articles of various description were spread out in various stalls. It was a long bazar. The king said, "Put your hand on anyone object in this bazar and it will be handed over to you." People moved from one stall to another making their choice: each article was more attractive than the other. The king sat at the far end of the bazar. After spending a fair amount of time each one selected something and was given that article, as promised by the king. One apparently foolish woman moved on from one end of the bazar to the other, looking at all articles but not selecting anyone of them for herself. When she reached the other end, the king questioned her "What have you selected?" She placed her hand over the head of the king himself and replied "I have selected you, Sir. Now, are you not mine, according to promise?" The king was startled at this but he was very pleased. He said, "Yes—I am thine, now what do you want?" The apparently foolish woman replied "Is not the whole of this bazar yours? And, are you not mine?" This is the secret of success; and of success for all time.

All success will follow the man or woman who has found Him—the king of kings. He will not have to run after success. Success will run after him. How can he be reached then? Ask those who have reached Him.

The easiest road is through love and service of His children—humanity. But the love must be genuine and the service must be selfless.



Only when a man suffers from a sense of duality, does he see the other, smell the other, suck the other, talk of another, hear the other, bother about the other, touch the other and know the other. But, where one and the only one self pervades all, there is nothing separate. There are no sense-organs separate from self, the see, smell or talk. There remains nothing separate from self to be heard of, bothered about, touched with and known. That through which all is known and which is knowledge as such, cannot be known through any sense organ, mind or intellect.

—Swami Rama Tirtha

धर्मं कृत्वा कर्मणां तात मुखं
महाप्रतापः सवितेव भाति।
हीनो हि धर्मेण महीमयीमां
लब्ध्वा नरः सीदति पापबुद्धिः॥

"Placing virtue before all other concerns of life, a man shineth like the sun when its splendour is great. A man devoid of virtue, and of vicious soul, is overtaken by ruin, although he may obtain the whole of this earth."

—Mahābhārata, Udyogaprava (XXVII.6)

There is no consciousness greater than God-consciousness.

—Jayadayal Goyandka

Vedānta

—Prof. K. L. Bhalla

The *Vedas* have persisted down the ages because the seers comprehended the superiority of mind over matter. *Vedānta* means 'the end of the *Veda*'. It is monistic pantheism—*Advaita*. The great exponent of the *Vedānta* system was Ācārya Śaṅkara. *Brahma* is the ground of all things. *Brahma* and Ātman are identified. Enlightenment consists in meditation and the conquest of the individual self by asceticism.

According to Swāmī Bhuteśānanda "*Vedānta* means the culmination, or the deepest mysteries, of the *Vedas*. It is not any sectarian scripture. You do not find mention of any sect in the whole of Vedic literature. The word *Vedānta* connotes being absolutely free from all denominational religions. It is a way of life, and an exhortation to realise the ultimate truth which can be attained through long practice. Usually *Vedānta* means the rational understanding of the mysteries of the *Vedas*."

The Supreme spirit is often referred to in *Vedānta* as *Sat-Cit-Ānanda* that is Being, Intelligence Bliss. *Vedānta* points out that God is the only reality, all creation or separate existence is *Māyā* or illusion. The *Upaniṣads* together with the *Bhagavadgītā* and Bādarāyaṇa's *Brahmasūtra* constitute the doctrine of *Vedānta*. *Brahma* is beyond all qualifications, and nothingness which yet is the source of life and joy. The final blessedness is unconsciousness, a dreamless sleep.

In the words of the French historian, Victor Cousin—"When we read with attention the philosophical monuments of the orient—above all, those of India—we discover there

many a truth so profound that we are constrained to bend the knee before the philosophy of the East and to see in this cradle of the human race, the native land of the highest philosophy." In his poem 'Auguries of innocence' William Blake said—

"To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour."

This means to find out the universal soul in tangible things like sand and flower. Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha observed, "You will see that this brain of your will become of infinite power if you realise your oneness with the all. This is what puts you in perfect harmony with the whole world. *Brahma* is an impersonal all embracing spirit. The universal desire to be reunited with the absolute can be satisfied by following the path of knowledge." There are many sciences, philosophies and religions that give their different and conflicting interpretations, in the Eastern World and Western World as well yet the doctrine of *Vedānta* is the clearest, most coherent and most profound of all.

Lord Kṛṣṇa states in the *Gītā*—"This is the Brahmic state, O Arjuna, attaining it, one is no longer deluded. Being established therein even in the hour of death, one attains final liberation in *Brahma*" (II. 72). *Vedānta* is a panacea for present day ills. This may sound strange but it is very much true. Today's world is torn by conflict, strife and dissension. But what is the root cause of all these stresses and strains? It is this belief that we have nothing in common whereas the great Ṛṣis have held that all human beings have the same divine spark.

Swāmī Vivekānanda and Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha went abroad and told the people that what the sages had said would be relevant for all times to come. Peace and prosperity can prevail among nations by adhering to the teachings of

Vedānta and practising them in daily life.

The objection often raised is that it is not possible to live upto *Vedānta* in the modern world where might is right and each individual is very much swayed by pride and prejudice. But the question is whether we should allow things to stay as they are. The answer is to find out a better way of life which can be had by following the precepts of *R̥ṣis*. In other words, our salvation lies in *Vedānta*.

We are afraid of death because we have identified ourselves with mortal frame. We see our end with the dissolution of body. But we forget that soul is immortal and it is beyond the reach of any sort of calamity. *Vedānta* can help us to know our Real Being—this knowledge will put an end to our sufferings. In the words of Paramahansa Yogānanda, "The joy of God-realization is boundless, unceasing, all the time new. Body, mind—nothing can disturb you when you are in that consciousness—such is the grace and glory of Lord.

Self-knowledge is the goal of human life. Ignorance is the root cause of all ills and it gives rise to ego which obscures the world of non-dual Reality. Darkness that causes delusive cognition can be removed by *Vedānta*. To conclude let us worship everything as God—every form as His temple. Such is the God that *Vedānta* preaches.

Vedānta is all comprehensive. It includes every stage, every process of spiritual practice. It is only on the stand point of *Vedānta* that all religions can be harmonized.



Devotion is constant remembrance of God with one thought, with one ideal that flows like an unbroken stream of oil poured from one vessel to another. Devotion is regarded as a very efficacious method of attaining Self-realization.

—Swami Sivananda

Divine Grace of Purity of Mind and Heart

—M. P. Mathur

The quintessence of purity of mind and heart can be achieved by this human body in this very life if our ultimate aim is God-realization, as God has mercifully given us this human body not to bear comfort and discomfort but to rise above it and to attain *Ānanda* and 'Eternal Peace'. After the attainment of *Ānanda* and 'Eternal Peace' nothing remains to be achieved by us in this world, as propounded by Lord Kṛṣṇa (*Gītā* VI. 22). God has been pleased to give us this human body in the form of a passport for coming to Him, so everyone of us has a birthright for God-realization. One who does not make an earnest effort in this direction and fritter away the precious time in idle and fruitless pursuits means that his birth has been proved to be a waste. *Santa Tulasīdāsa*ji has said as under—

जो न तै भव सागर नर समाज अस पाइ ।

सो कृत निंदक मंदमति आत्माहन गति जाइ ॥

(*Mānasa*. VII. 44)

God out of sheer grace has bestowed power of discretion upon a human being with its aid he can rise above from favourable and unfavourable circumstances, can discriminate good and evil and by doing selfless service to humanity can even control the God. Through this human body we should perform our duty and uplift the self rather than to indulge in worldly pursuits. The attainment of purity of

mind and heart is alone feasible through this human body as we have attained this body out of sheer good luck as enunciated by *Santa Tulasīdāsa* as under—

बड़े भाग मानुष तनु पावा । सुर दुर्लभ सब ग्रंथहि गावा ।

(*Mānasa* VII. 42.7)

For knowing the crucial aspect of purity of mind it is incumbent to know the very nature of mind. Arjuna said to Lord Kṛṣṇa, in utter despair that mind is restless, turbulent, powerful and obstinate. To control the mind is as hard as to control the wind (*Gītā* VI. 34). Lord Kṛṣṇa listened the general complaint of strivers and gave the reply in *Gītā* (VI. 36) as under—

“Undoubtedly, O ! Arjuna, the mind is restless and hard to control. But by practice (*Abhyāsa*) and dispassion (*Vairāgya*) it can be controlled.”

Lord Kṛṣṇa gave out the secret of controlling the mind in these two words *Abhyāsa* and *Vairāgya*. Even all the saints and sages have declared that there is no other way of controlling the mind except through practice and dispassion.

In this connection it is worthwhile to quote a dialogue between Rāmākṛṣṇa Paramahansa and a devotee, in which the former emphasizes a fundamental point, which anyone needs to remember.

Rāmākṛṣṇa—Do not sit idle simply because your spiritual consciousness has been awakened a little. Go forward beyond the forest of sandal wood; there are other and more valuable things. Silver mines, gold mines and so on.

Priya—Sir, our legs are in chains, we cannot go forward.

Rāmākṛṣṇa—What if the legs are chained? The important thing is the mind. Bondage is of the mind, and freedom is also of mind.

Priya—But the mind is not under my control.

Rāmākṛṣṇa—How is that? There is such a thing as *Abhyāsa-Yoga* ‘Yoga through practice.’ Keep up the

practice and you will find that your mind will follow in whatever direction you lead it. The mind is like a white cloth just returned from laundry. It will be red if you dip in the red dye and blue if you dip in the blue. It will have whatever colour you dip it in."

To have complete control over the mind we should strengthen our will power to control the mind. Our will to control the mind can never be strong until and unless we have deliberately and irrevocably renounced pleasure as one of the main pursuits of our life. To strengthen the will to such a degree that even in the face of repeated failures we are not disheartened rather with every new failure to control the mind we are aroused to fresh endeavours with new enthusiasm. We have to remove the causes of weakness of will and to inject the strength into it. We are assured by our great teachers and saints that the perfect control of mind is possible. All thoughts to the contrary must be eschewed like poison.

One who has no control over the mind cannot have peace of mind. One who has no peace of mind, how can he have happiness? Through control of mind one can attain spiritual illumination. A controlled mind can easily be concentrated. Unless and until the pleasure motive is removed one cannot have a strong will to control the mind. The pleasure urge is so deeply ingrained in our flesh and blood that it can be got rid of, if it all, only with greatest difficulty. It is true that the pleasure motive eats away our will to control the mind. Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa says as under—

"When does the attraction of sense pleasure die away? When one realizes the consummation of all happiness and pleasure in God—the indivisible eternal ocean of bliss. Those who enjoy "Him" can find no attraction in the cheap worthless pleasure of world."

He who has once tasted the refined crystal of sugar-

candy finds no pleasure in tasting dirty treacle. He who has slept in a palace will not find pleasure in lying in a hovel. The soul that has tasted the sweetness of divine bliss finds no happiness in the vulgar pleasure of this world."

The will to control the mind is not enough. We need also to know something about the nature of mind. In order to succeed in controlling the mind one must have in addition a strong will, faith in oneself. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Gītā* (VI. 5) that one must oneself subdue one's weakness and raise oneself by oneself. One who intends to control the mind must practise this teaching. The entire work of controlling the mind will have to be done by oneself. No one else can do it for us. To control the mind we have to follow two outstanding principles.

1. Those who have no moral and other principles and regularity of life will find it almost impossible to control the mind. We have to bring rhythm into our life in order to control the mind.

2. To control the mind we must check its proverbial restlessness.

The purer the mind the easier it is to control. Purity of mind is insisted upon. The impurities of mind should be assiduously avoided such as envy, hatred, anger, fear, jealousy, lust, greed, conceit, temptation etc. These impurities cause disturbance in the mind by creating attachment and aversion and rob its tranquillity.

We must not fail to seek the company of perfect or fully holy souls and sages, the powerful vibrations of his holiness penetrate within us and bring about a speedy change in our mind. As long as we have more desires than the desire for the realization of God, it will be difficult to control the mind. It is hard to control the divided mind. Holy company removes the mental impurities. Lord Kṛṣṇa says the association of holy saints roots out all attachment. Our attachments are

most powerful impediments in controlling the mind.

In one sense to control the mind is to train it to behave in proper manner. It is like catching a wild horse and training it into a circus horse to do feats after a thorough training in the same way we have to train our wayward mind. Meditation on God is the most effective way of controlling the mind. It is better to keep the mind filled with holy thoughts as much as possible, as a result of which the mind will be purified. The purer the mind the easier it is to control. The control of senses, absence of anger, tranquillity, absence of fickleness are some of divine qualities, which a true lover of God gets without deliberately striving for them. In other words he attains control of mind in a spontaneous way.

Human mind is like water and it has a tendency of moving downwards, as water flows in a ditch, in the same way the mind inculcates evil and low thoughts in ordinary course of nature. As water is lifted upwards with the help of electric pump, similarly we should raise our mind with the help of *Japa* of *Gāyatrī-Mantra* and engage our mind in the constant remembrance of God. Thus we would be able to control the mind. The simplest and surest method of controlling the mind is through impeccable love and faith in God. There is no greater blessing in life than a controlled state of mind, which is much of assistance in the meditation of God, it is well said by a saint as—

निर्मल मन जन सो मोहि पावा । मोहि कपट छल छिद्र न भावा ॥

(*Mānasa* V. 43. 5)

Our mind should be free from envy and jealousy but be compassionate and full of piety, and then alone success in our life would lie at our feet. In dirty water, in dirty opaque mirror and in mud the reflection of our face does not appear clear, then the sun cannot be blamed for the same. Similarly if our heart is not pure then we could not have the glimpse of God. Whose heart is impregnated with

honesty, justice, love and forgiveness, piety, tolerance, detachment, peace and pure thoughts then his life also become the same.

Therefore, one should ponder over such thoughts all the time. So long impure thoughts, injustice, anger, dishonesty, greed, lust for pleasure pursuits remain in the heart, then one would not be happy nor his life would be pure nor his heart would be pure. Therefore, it is essential that impious thoughts be thrown out of the heart. If pure thoughts are accommodated in place of impure ones then the idea of casting off the impure thoughts be given up instead thinking of pure thoughts be commenced. In place of worldly anxiety and impure thoughts the constant remembrance of God's mercy, grace, justice. Love, selfless service and tranquillity be given place in our heart, which will purify our heart and be a great asset in God-realization. God pervades everywhere in every article however small it may be *Santa Tulasīdāsa* says as under—

हरि व्यापक सर्वत्र समाना। प्रेम तें प्रगट होहिं मैं जाना॥

(*Mānasa* I. 184.5)

With God's grace all the hurdles and impediments of life will fade away in the same way as darkness is dispelled in the light of the sun.

The purity of heart could alone be achieved by constant and uninterrupted *Bhajana* of God all the time. *Santa Tulasīdāsa* has said as under—

तुलसी सो अति चतुरता, रामचरण लौलीन॥

(*Tulasīsatasaī* 47)

Meaning thereby that person is wise who purify his thoughts, action and behaviour by constantly doing *Bhajana*. Those strivers who attained Divine love of God for them constant and uninterrupted *Bhajana* becomes part of their life and those who have not achieved Divine love of God

for them the habit for incessant *Bhajana* should be developed. Those strivers who crave salvation or realization of God without doing *Bhajana* commit a great blunder as said by a saint as under—

बारि मथें घृत होइ बरु सिकता ते बरु तेल।

बिनु हरि भजन न भव तरिअ यह सिद्धांत अपेल॥

(*Mānasa* VII.122)

Meaning thereby by churning water ghee may come out or oil may be extracted from the sand but without doing *Hari Bhajana* the striver cannot cross the mundane ocean, this is an outstanding rule. Thus it is imperative for a devotee to do *Bhajana* all the time in day and in night.

If *Bhajana* is done with impeccable love and devotion for God while taking bath, food, walking or doing work for one's livelihood then all the work becomes *Bhajana* of Hari. The *Bhajana* may go on irrespective of the fact whether one's mind is concentrated on God or not but in due course of such practice mind will automatically be fixed in the remembrance of God. Kabīra has said as under—

साँस साँस सुमिरन करौ, यह उपाय अति नीक।

The habit of thinking of *Bhagavān's Līlā*, His attributes, *Guṇas* and His name all the time, should be developed and inculcated. The value of *Bhajana* has been pointed out as under—

नाहं वसामि वैकुण्ठे योगिनां हृदये न च।

मद्भक्ता यत्र गायन्ति तत्र तिष्ठामि नारद॥

The moment a true devoted *Bhakta* of God engages himself in *Bhajana* of God and remembers 'Him' with true and pure heart then 'He' appears before him in no time whether 'He' may be visible to him or not.

Bhajana may be done in any manner it makes you *Jñānī* and purifies the heart. Howsoever a great sinner or

immoral person may be, if he takes refuge at the feet of God and does uninterrupted and constant *Bhajana* of God then he becomes *Dharmātmā* in no time and attains everlasting peace as pointed out in *Gītā* (IX.30-31). If *Bhajana* is done with complete devotion and love with pure heart then its effect would be like electric current. The *Satsaṅga* or association with saints and holy persons have great effect upon strivers as said by a saint as under—

पारस में अरु संत में बड़ो आंतरो जान।

वह लोहा कंचन करै वह करै आपु समान॥

If *Bhajana* done with having oneness with God then it carries much weight such as Mīrā Bāī became a great lady saint on account of her oneness with Lord Kṛṣṇa as she sung in these immortal words. In (*Gītā* X. 10) it has come that a true devotee of God desires nothing excepting his beloved God. He neither craves for 'समता' nor for 'तत्त्वज्ञान' but remains engrossed all the time in *Bhajana* of his beloved God.

As fire has inherent power to burn articles and to give light in the same way *Bhajana* of God has the power to burn all sins of a devotee who engages himself in remembrance of God.

The devotee who engrossed himself in the *Bhajana* of God's name then God purifies his heart and destroys his sins in no time. When we have staunch and unflinching faith in *Bhajana* of Lord Kṛṣṇa with impeccable pure love then He will have to appear before us and give his *Darśana*. When a devotee has faith in the oneness with God and regards 'Him' as his own then God in return would also consider 'His' devotee as His 'own'. Whatever we see in this universe we find God residing in them. God not only resides in the heart of Human beings but also in animals, birds and insects. What to say of that if he exists in animate and inanimate. It is an established fact that whoever causes

harm or injury to another, he causes harm or injury to God who abides in that person's heart. Therefore, one should avoid to cause harm or injury to another person. Whoever feels God's presence in everybody, he will not cause harm or injury. As water exists in ice, earth exists in earthen pot, gold exists in golden ornaments, cotton exists in cotton garments, in the same way in this universe God exists. Therefore, the ultimate aim of Human-being is to attain God in this very life and whatever action is done it should be done for pleasing Almighty. God is not far away from His devotee and exists in his heart and nearer to him. It is well said as under—

चहुँ दिसि आरति चहुँ दिसि पूजा । चहुँ दिसि राम और नहिँ दूजा ॥

Rabiyā was a great lady saint of Arabia, once a saint came to her house and called Rabiyā to come out of the house for seeing the manifestation and beauty of nature.

Rabiyā did not come out and replied from inside the house, you may see the beauty of the creation of God from outside. I am having *Darśana* or glimpse of the shadow of God inside the depth of my heart.

घट-घट मेरा साँझ्याँ, सूनी सेज न कोय ॥

One who has attained such a high position then he finds no difference between him and 'His' beloved God. Such a high position of heart is alone achieved when it is completely purified by constant remembrance of God and 'His' uninterrupted *Bhajana*. The Divine grace of purity of Mind and heart leads in the realization of God, which is the ultimate goal of a devotee.



Read and Digest

The Lord runs to meet him who takes even a single stride towards Him.

The Lord always acts for our good.

To devote oneself to God (who is our greatest benefactor) is to attain the *summum bonum* of existence.

The Lord's grace can be directly perceived through His adoration.

Even the greatest sins are instantaneously wiped out by the adoration of the Lord, through His Grace.

Adoration of the Lord is the sure way to mental peace and joy.

Adoration of the Lord makes one eligible for Divine Love.

Divine Love is the highest achievement and endeavour for man.

A study of scriptures dealing with God is also part of *Satsaṅga*.

Instructions and admonitions received in *Satsaṅga* should be retained and assimilated.

Nāma-japa and *Satsaṅga* should be simultaneously resorted to. *Nāma-Japa* would wipe out the impurities of the heart while *Satsaṅga* would dispel all illusions and would develop faith in God.



The Vision of God

—‘*Shree-Bhaisab*’

A maths. lecturer in a foreign university called on a brother-saint in India. The saint talked on the need of God in life here and hereafter.

Q. Brother, who has seen the other world? Who knows God?

A. Sister, if the billions in the world have not seen, it should not be taken to mean that He does not exist. On the other hand, if a single person did, you have no reason to disbelieve him.

Q. Not all devotees realised Him?

A. Even if a single one did, it is enough to make out that:—

- i. He exists: only then one could see Him.
- ii. He is accessible: only then did the one reach Him.
- iii. He can be realised by us also: He cannot discriminate between one and another.

Not Vision But Love

But it is not the vision of God that is important: it is love for God that is overall important. Feeling the sweetness of someone's love for us makes life purposeful and worth living. We can enrich our life with the sweetness of the love of God Himself. If we do not love Him, His vision appearing before us will not charm or cheer us up. Listen to an interesting anecdote in this connection:—

An educated and good hearted lady called on me, and with sort of concern, wanted to know what she was going

to do if she adhered to spiritual practice "as you have suggested; and as a result God appeared before me face to face? At best, I could offer Him a seat on my sofa tea and snacks and all that. But, what next? Very boring indeed having no common interest between Him and me. Help, Sir!"

Very simple and sincere, intelligible as well. If there is no love, there can be no happiness in meeting anyone. It is here that not merely seeing God but a feeling of love for Him is necessary. Only a heart bubbling with love will relish in God's vision. Demons didn't like the sight of Lords Rāma, and Kṛṣṇa.

A companion: But, Sir, understanding is necessary to love, and we don't understand God.....His myriad mysterious ways.

This is where you intellectuals go a bit too far! You want to understand the Divine with material senses of perception. Is it possible? Dear Brother, God is not to understand or philosophise on. God is to love and delight in, You don't have to understand the rose: you just relish its odours and colours.

The prince of a state loves an innocent village girl. When she comes to know of it, she too grows similar feeling for him. When married, he of his own, tells and teaches her all that he would like her to know of him. If we love God or long to love Him, He Himself will endow us with the requisite understanding about Him.

Need for God

Q. The concept of God is understandable. Where however is the need for God in our modern life?

A. The need for God is greater today than ever before. Modern life is beset with strains and stresses. Most maladies germinate from tensions and apprehensions. Medical or psychiatric treatment do but little good. If man looks to God, God inspires courage and confidence in him to bear the

trials and tribulations of life. It is here that modern man directly needs God—his good angel and saviour.

Spirituality and prayer help people live longer and healthier lives: study reports said in USA in a world conference of physicians, clergy and academicians held in Boston.

Occasions come in life when one feels lonely or left alone. If a person maintains a link with the Lord, the Lord comes running to help him in those moments. God stands by his side like a mother: He shares in his sorrow like a friend. He turns out to be the most congenial company in solitude.

Faith in God enables a person to overcome the fear of death and of the life hereafter.

All this, however, is not the whole story. The basic point is, as *Vedas* assert, that the individual soul constantly strives to seek the Source from where it came. M. Rumi, Sufi saint, elaborates the point. He says that man's soul is an aspect of the Supreme Reality. It becomes restless when it is combined with matter. It craves for reunion with the Supreme Being.

Happiness comes to humans only after realisation of the need, love and vision of God.

May we all strive for it!

Sender—*Prof. N. Gupta*



The desire for the pleasure born of sense-contact is more deadly than happiness itself. The desire for the body to continue is more fatal than having a body. The delusion towards a family, is more ruinous than having a family. The greed of wealth, is more destructive than wealth itself.

—*Swami Ramsukhadas*

What Brings Us Here

— S. D. Mehra

Why are we here?
It should be rather clear.
Is it for some fun and frolick?
Does not make any logic!
There must be some higher aim,
Or some subtle game!

It is all behind the veil,
A veil, He alone can unveil.
It being beyond you and me,
Howsoever high or mighty we may be.

But how and when have we to pay?
Is known only to Him we have to obey
And unless we have been through it all,
There is no escape for us at all.
If we keep all this in mind,
And act wisely, then He is kind.

Let us then take it in our normal stride,
Without any resentment and swim with the tide,

This being what we sowed,
Without creating unnecessary row.



Superior Happiness

—Subhash Lakhota

Entire humanity in the whole of the world in this new millennium is looking forward to achieve happiness at any cost and by any means. One of the noblest aim of this life is to achieve the bliss and pleasure of happiness. A step ahead of happiness is known as Superior Happiness. The real joy, bliss and experience of Superior Happiness cannot be described in words and the same can be only experienced by a person.

Superior Happiness to achieve, does not cost too much money. It is rather the intense desire for experiencing Superior Happiness which alone brings in this real life time experience of Superior Happiness.

In the last four hundred years the real Superior Happiness has been achieved by various persons in different situations only if they had not bargained with Superior Happiness together with materialistic gains. The basic grass route concept of achieving Superior Happiness lies in leading a real simple life, with no much show-off and also by having a control of all your desires.

It is not the riches of the world which can guarantee you the Superior Happiness in this worldly life. Way back Socrates said that men are to be esteemed for their virtue, not their wealth and the "Men are to be redeemed for their virtue not for their wealth." He further said, "Fine and rich clothes are suited for comedians." The wicked live to eat, the good eat to be able to live. Persons desiring Superior Happiness must lead a simple life and must work hard in order to avoid idleness for it is said that the idle man makes

an easy target for the devil.

Thomas Aquinos had declared that it is impossible for happiness, which is the last end of man, to consist in wealth and that true happiness can be attained through the vision of divine essence. Sharing one's excess 'riches' with the poor is one of the ways of enjoying and experiencing the Superior Happiness. This is also the view of great philosopher Calvin who felt that attainment of wealth was the sign of God's blessing.

Persons desiring Superior Happiness should not make vulgar display of their assets and possessions. It may be interesting to note that way back in the year 1651 the members of Massachusetts General Court had issued sumptuary decree stating that no person whose visible estates shall not exceed the true and indifferent value of 200 pounds shall wear any gold or silver, or silver lace, or gold and silver buttons, or any bone lace above 2 shillings per yard, or silk hoods or scarves, the penalty of 10 shillings for every such offence shall be levied." It appears that with such stringent rules and regulations which existed over 300 years ago then at that time the quality of life would have been better in those years and that during that era Superior Happiness would have been a reality for most of the civilians.

Transcendental simplicity is yet another avenue to achieve Superior Happiness since transcendentalists are of the view that the human life is too precious to waste on mere pursuit and enjoyment of things and the common goal of the followers to transcendental simplicity principles was to develop such modes of living that reduced their material and institutional needs to minimum extent so that a person could easily pursue spiritual truths and moral ideals. Thus, the follower of transcendental simplicity is bound to achieve Superior Happiness as he would be less attached to the worldly pursuits. Emerson and Thoreau believed in the concept of transcendental simplicity.

Emerson believed in the romantic desire to pursue simplicity. Thus simple living is the passport for Superior Happiness and bliss. Thoreau was fundamentally preacher of the theme—"simplify your life."

With the increase in the possessions of a person, his desires do increase and then the person is required to work harder, worry more and communicate less with his family and friends, says an article printed in *New York Times* of 11th November, 1904. Hence, all those desiring Superior Happiness should remove from their mind the only aim of increasing riches at any cost in any manner.

Roosevelt had once declared that excessive materialism was the greatest danger threatening the country. Even in this new millennium this is true. Edward Bok the Editor of *Ladies Home Journal* wrote that it was a hard thing for those who have little to believe that the greatest happiness of life is with them; that it is not with those who have abundance. He went on to say that "more we have the less we actually enjoy it." Bok further went to say that the woman of simplest means is the happiest woman on earth, if she only knew it. Thus specially for ladies the Superior Happiness would lie in 'keep means to its minimum.' David Grayson attributed the 'Habit of contentment' which provided him happiness. Yes, in true sense it is contentment which brings in Superior Happiness for all human beings.

Ralph Borsodi a social critic of New York in the late 1920s was of the view that when a person produces more things than are necessary to good living, he wastes the time and the material both of which should be used to make the world a more beautiful place to live. He practised the theme of creative pleasure and felt that rural and simple life would bring spiritual satisfaction.

More and more people the world over are now sick and tired of the present day complicated life and yearn for

Superior Happiness which can be achieved by augmenting simple life style and by enjoying the joys of contact with nature. Way back seventy-five years ago Edward Bob in USA expressed the feelings of the people as 'Money is king' and 'Business is our God' Commerce rules." But when he was 56 years old as well as wealthy he was controlling the famous *Ladies Home Journal* which in the year 1919 was selling 20,00,000 copies, still he left his business and decided to devote his money to philanthropy while his time to social service. I think that moulding his life in this manner must have brought him Superior Happiness. He advocated early retirement and was of the view that 'Bliss in possession does not last.' The real bliss of life lies in aiming to achieve Superior Happiness.

For those desiring to achieve Superior Happiness and the bliss of happiness should adopt gentleness, frugality, humility and simplicity which will ultimately mean plain living, high thinking and the higher real Superior Happiness.



When love that is open and unselfish is present in the family, children will be more apt to feel they can come to the parents to discuss anything and not be met with anger, but with honest explanations and understanding. Yes, it is all right to give discipline when needed, but never punish a child when you yourself are angry. This is equally true between husbands and wives; they must be able to sit down quietly and talk patiently, each expressing what is felt in the heart, each being a helpful companion to the other. Practise the art of harmonious communication. It nurtures a relationship in which God loves to enter and reign.

—Self-Realization

Personal Relationship with God

—Sister Priya

There was a moment in time—actually it was beyond time—when God created each one of us. It was at that moment that our personal relationship with Him, and His personal relationship with us, began. Before that we were part of spirit—you could say perhaps that we were in His Heart. Now, God never changes; so from His point of view that perfect relationship has always been and will always be. His attitude towards us is eternally the unconditional love of the perfect father, mother, friend, beloved. We, on the other hand—well, you could say that we got “lost in time.” As our souls progress through many lifetimes, there is some force within us that keeps us evolving upward. We feel that force as a constant yearning for something higher, better, that draws us onward. We have come to the spiritual path because we recognize that yearning to be our need for God—our need for the perfect love relationship that is forever our own.



ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद् धनम्॥

"All this whatever is there (animate and inanimate) in this universe, should be pervaded or enveloped by the Supreme God. By renunciation protect the self and do not covet anybody's wealth."

—Īśāvāsyopaniṣad (1)

Purāṇas and Upapurāṇas

—Akula Rajendra Babu

Introduction—

Purāṇas are the theological treatises dealing more or less of the same class of *Itihāsas*. It contains five characteristics viz., History, Cosmology (with various symbolical illustrations of philosophical principles, secondary creation, Genealogy of kings and *Manvantaras*). All of them belong to the *Samhitās*.

Origin of Purāṇa—

The *Purāṇa* means '*Purāṇam Ākhyānam*' as is evidenced by Vedic legends. The *Purāṇa* is significant and occupies the place left by the *Vedas*.

The orthodox Hindus do believe that the *Purāṇas* like *Vedas* were the breathing of the *Prāṇāyāma* of the Absolute Being or *Brahma*. Two *Purāṇas* viz., *Agni* and *Matsya* say that *Purāṇa* at first was remembered by *Brahmā* the creator and then the four *Vedas* sprang forth out of his four mouths. It is to be noted and the popular belief is that all the 18 *Purāṇas* with an equal number of *Upapurāṇas* were composed by *Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa* who is none other than the incarnation of Lord *Viṣṇu*.

The *Purāṇas* were compiled by *Vyāsa* from age to age. In the present age he is *Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana*.

To popularise the religion of the *Vedas*, the *Purāṇas* were written. They contain the sum and substance of the *Vedas*. The aim of each *Purāṇa* is to express on the minds of the masses who are illiterate the teachings of the *Vedas* and to rekindle in them the devotion to God through

concrete examples, myths, stories, legends, life history of kings and great men, allegories and chronicles of great historical bygone events. The sages of yore made use of this instrument as a media to illustrate the eternal principles of religion. It is only for the masses and not for the scholars who can understand the secrets hidden in them—the philosophy.

Darśana—

Darśana means literary sight or wisdom. It is a system of philosophy. The *Darśana* literature is more philosophical. Each *Darśana* is a way of looking into the truth and they are very stiff. The scholars can digest the hidden truths but not the masses who can understand them.

Religion has made it possible and taught in a very easy way through these *Purāṇas*. A brief description of the universe not visible to our naked physical eye. The more we read the Puranic stories, the more we are delighted and it is also of absorbing interest.

The eighteen *Purāṇas* are—

1. *The Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (2) *The Nārādīya Purāṇa* (3) *The Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. (4) *The Garuḍa (Suparṇa) Purāṇa* (5) *The Padma Purāṇa* (6) *The Varāha Purāṇa* (7) *The Brahma Purāṇa* (8) *The Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* (9) *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* (10) *The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (11) *The Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* (12) *The Vāmana Purāṇa* (13) *The Matsya Purāṇa* (14) *The Kūrma Purāṇa* (15) *The Liṅga Purāṇa* (16) *The Śiva Purāṇa* (17) *The Skanda Purāṇa* and (18) *The Agni Purāṇa*.

Of these eighteen *Purāṇas* six are *Sāttvic* and glorify Viṣṇu, six are *Rājasic* and glorify Brahmā and the rest are *Tāmasic* they glorify Śiva.

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is a chronicle of the various *Avatāras* of Lord. Ten *Avatāras* are there and belong to Viṣṇu. The aim of each and every *Avatāra* is

to protect the world from some great calamity or catastrophe, to destroy the wicked and to protect the virtuous. The ten *Avatāras* are—

(1) Matsya (the fish) (2) Kūrma (the tortoise) (3) Varāha (the boar) (4) Narasiṃha (the Man-lion) (5) *Vāmana* (the dwarf) (6) Paraśurāma (Rāma with axe) (7) Rāma the hero of *Rāmāyaṇa* the son of Daśaratha (8) Kṛṣṇa (the teacher of *Gītā*) (9) Buddha (the prince ascetic founder of Buddhism) and (10) Kalki (the hero riding on a white horse) who is to come at the end of *Kaliyuga*.

To impart knowledge to the *Mānasic Putras* of Lord Brahmā (*Kumāras*) Lord Śiva incarnated Himself as Dakṣiṇāmūrti. He took human form to initiate Śaivite savants like Thiru Jñāna Sambandār, Appar or Thirunavykarasan Swāmigal. Thiru Sundaramūrti Swāmigal and Thiru Manickka Vasagan Swāmigal. Lord took the form in human flesh and blood to help his devotees and relieve their burden or sufferings. In Tamil *Purāṇas* the *Līlās* of Lord Śiva is recorded like *Peria Purāṇam* of Sekkilian, *Śiva Parākramam* and *Thiruvilayadal Purāṇam*.

The *Upa-Purāṇas* are also eighteen. They are—

(1) *Sanatkumāra* (2) *Narasimha* (3) *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (4) *Śiva Rahasya* (5) *Durvāsā* (6) *Kapila* (7) *Vāmana* (8) *Bhārgava* (9) *Vāruṇa* (10) *Kālikā* (11) *Sāmba* (12) *Nandī* (13) *Sūrya* (14) *Parāśara* (15) *Vāsiṣṭha*. (16) *Devī Bhāgavata* (17) *Gaṇeśa* and (18) *Haṃsa*.

Study of *Purāṇas*, listening of sacred recitals of scriptures describing the transcendent. *Śravaṇa* is a part and parcel of *Nava Vidha Bhakti*. *Kathās* and *Upaṇyāsa* open the springs of devotion in the hearts of hearers and develop *Premā Bhakti*.

Conclusion—

The language of the *Vēdas* is archaic. The subtle philosophy of *Vedānta* and the *Upaṇiṣads* is extremely

difficult to grasp and digest. The *Purāṇas* are of special value as they present philosophical truths and hidden precious teachings in an easier and lucid manner. They give ready access to the mysteries of life and the key to happiness and to bliss. One may imbibe these teachings to start a new fresh life of *Dharma Niṣṭhā* and *Ādhyātmika Sāadhanā* from now onwards.

The *Purāṇas* are not only important to the historians but to antiquarians also as sources of political history and history of religion. This also helps an interesting study to our indigenous poets.



यस्मात् पूर्वैः कृतं राजन् ब्रह्मर्षिभिरनुष्ठितम्।
अदुष्टं दूषयसि ये यच्च मूर्ध्न्यस्मृशः पदा॥
यच्चापि त्वमृषीन् मूढ ब्रह्मकल्पान् दुरासदान्॥
वाहान् कृत्वा वाहयसि तेन स्वर्गान्द्विप्रभः।
ध्वंस पाप परिभ्रष्टः क्षीणपुण्यो महीतले॥

(Agastya said) "Since thou hast pronounced as spurious the unexceptionable hymns to the *Veda* which have been recited by *Brahmarṣis* (Brahman saints), and since thou hast touched my head with thy foot, and since thou, O ignorant wretch, hast turned these unapproachable saints, equal to *Brahma*, into animals for carrying thee, therefore, O wretch, be divested of thy lustre, and being hurled headlong, fall thou from heaven, the effect of all thy good deeds being exhausted."

—*Mahābhārata, Udyogaparva* (XVII. 14—16)

Spiritual experience can be transmitted from one person to another in the manner in which material things are handed over from one person to another.

—*The Mountain Path*

Vireśwara Mukhopādhyāya— An Honest Boy

A young boy hardly of fourteen was strolling in a considerably big garden near Malda city in Bengal. In the meanwhile Baśīra Muhammad, a Kābulī traveller happened to reach the same garden with all his belongings. He took rest in the garden for some time and later went on his way leaving behind him by mistake a bag containing five thousand rupees. Seeing the bag full of money lying on the ground that Bengali boy of fourteen lifted it up and decided to return it to its real owner.

After covering a little distance Baśīra Muhammad realized that he had lost his money-bag. He then, out of extreme perplexity rushed towards the garden. Seeing him worried the boy asked, "O gentleman, why are you so worried? Have you lost something?" Baśīra Muhammad replied, "Yes. I have lost my bag full of money." Showing him the bag the boy said to him, "Take this bag of yours." He opened the bag and found the entire money intact. Not even a single paisa was stolen thereof. Then he said to the boy, "How could you be able to overcome the sense of greed even on seeing such a large amount?" The boy answered very humbly, "I have learnt it right from my childhood to look upon others' wealth as a clod and never to steal it." The traveller was astonished to hear his reply and wanted to give him five rupees as reward. But the boy refused to take the money and said, "I returned to you your money because it was my bounden duty, what of reward? Had I not returned your money to you, I would have committed an act of dishonesty."

Noticing his noble nature Baṣīra Muhammad thanked him much and got the story of his honesty published in newspapers. At last Baṣīra Muhammad revealed that all the money belonged to his master. He told if the boy had not returned the money my master would have lost faith in me and I would have been behind the bars. I cannot explain in words the beneficence done by the boy in my favour. I will never forget this boy and his kindness as well. I will pray to God for his longevity and prosperity both."

This boy was none else but Vīreśwara Mukhopādhyāya. Any person can become popular and worthy of being blessed on account of his virtuous deeds like Vīreśwara Mukhopādhyāya.

—Courtesy—*Kalyana*



He can be neither seized nor forsaken. He has no common or special mark. He is immovable, calm, and profound. In him there is neither light nor darkness. He pervades, free from change or false appearance. He is knowledge that constitutes release.

—*Maitreya Upaniṣad*

Your religion teaches you to feel the omnipresence of God and, in spite of this, if you do not have respect and regard for Him, you are not following your religion. If only we could feel the presence of God, we would shudder at telling a lie. Our eyes will blow-out, if we look at a lady with evil intentions. We should practise in life, what we know to be good and true, according to our religion.

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

Hatred ever kills, love never dies.

—*Divine Rays*

Hara-Kiri (Suicide)

—Yatindradasa

To live or not to live is the hardest decision to be taken by the few who face insurmountable adversities in life far beyond the limit of their tolerance. Those who are driven to the wall seem to feel that they are left with no other option than to take away their own life. Life is the most precious gift made available by nature to the living beings for their survival and perpetuation. The living beings value their life more than anything else in the world. What man detests and fears most is his own extinction. Even in the worst of circumstances, animals do not commit suicide and among all the species in the world, human beings are the rare exception. According to the psychologists, those who are highly depressed, find the mundane world uninteresting and dull and seek to opt out of life by committing Hara-Kiri. Hara-Kiri and Kamikaze are the Japanese equivalents for self-annihilation. Japan perhaps heads the list of nations in the number of suicides. The number goes up significantly when the economy is in very bad shape.

The reasons for the people resorting to the extreme remedy of seeking an easy way out of life by suicide can be many and varied. Failures in examination or romance or business or career make some people consider this last option of life. Poverty, incurable illnesses, broken home, bad marital relationship, bankruptcy etc., can be the other compelling reasons that drive people to take away their own life. The statistics furnished periodically by the Police Department furnish a reason-wise break up of the number

of suicides that make a very pathetic reading. Besides domestic and personal reasons, some prefer to die as martyrs by self-immolation or by consuming cyanide capsules or by serving as suicide bombers in support of some public cause or reform movement. Euthanasia is resorted as the last resort by people who suffer from painful terminal illnesses.

People who prefer to opt out of life use diverse methods to get rid of their life. Jumping from multi-storied building or seeking a watery grave by drowning or consuming poison or an overdose of sleeping pills or hanging from a ceiling fan or tree or shooting oneself etc., are the commonly adopted methods for committing suicide. It is highly unfortunate to find that there are authors who are not averse to writing books to provide formulae and recipes for the safest methods of committing suicide just to earn their living. What matters them most is money and not morality. Guide-book for self-improvement is quite understandable but a book on self destruction is beyond human comprehension. Should civilized society tolerate this patently unethical activity saying, "That is all right. Nothing wrong in this way of making a living for one's own survival." Can there be anything more cruel or heartless than this?

Age, sex, wealth, fame, power or position makes no difference as far as suicide is concerned. The rich and the famous as also the youthful in both sexes are equally prone to call it a day when they find life to be intolerable. The mundane world cannot offer them any fulfilment, happiness or peace in the darkest hours of their anguish, boredom and loneliness and they are left with the feeling that the only way out of life is to get rid of it. The legendary Hollywood actress Marilyn Monroe who was the darling of her followers and heartthrob of her fans preferred to die at the peak of her fame by consuming an overdose of sleeping pills. Another matinee idol Guru Datta who came into limelight

as an actor-producer was unable to keep pace with the changing times and seems to have preferred self-negation by ending his life abruptly. Tragedy struck the very wealthy family of Hindujās when a youthful member resorted to suicide. Many businessmen, industrialists, scientists, leading personalities all over the world have ended their lives by suicide. All these cases show that suicide is no respecter of wealth, greatness, glamour, power or fame. Some may begin life in an aristocratic manner to end it in the commonest way possible in seashore, pavement or in the streets when life is snuffed out of the perishable physical body where one dies matters very little. The paradox of life is that those who are excessively blessed with wealth and fame often are also excessively cursed with pain and misery and life is not, always a bed of roses.

Depending on our beliefs or even disbeliefs we lead our lives our own way though we find it very difficult to understand life and all its mystery. What part destiny or fate plays and what role self-efforts have in life is a deeper mystery. Dying is an essential part of life though poets, dramatists and writers may spend years seeking an answer to the anguished 'Why' of dying prematurely. Many may write about the life and achievements of the dead for the obituary column but none knows the mystery behind the phenomenon of sudden and unexpected death by suicide. Despite being aware of the fact that smoking, alcohol and psychedelic drugs are injurious to health, some resort to the slow way of committing suicide by taking recourse to the consumption of these toxic substances. Unable to bear the boredom of a purposeless, mechanical and vain life and not knowing what to do with it, the young prefer to play with their life by taking initially to smoking and slowly graduation to alcohol, drug addiction and sexual perversion. They do not realize that they are slowly poisoning themselves and

moving headlong towards their own doom. Glamorous and fashionable outward show seems to be meant to cover the hollowness and worthlessness felt inwardly.

Life can never last forever but it is cruel to nip it in the bud by aborting it in the embryonic stage itself. All have to meet their inevitable end by breathing their last but deliberately hastening the end prematurely is unwise and unethical. Nature itself makes appropriate provision for life's end and one should not be in a hurry to leave the world before the end is due by going against nature. Reaching the burial site or the cremation ground before the scheduled hour of departure besides being incomprehensible is also illegal and immoral. Even the darkest hour consists of only sixty painful minutes and does not last forever and one should have the courage to face adversity boldly.

The sole mission of doctors is to save human life at all cost by relieving the patients of their physical pain and bodily illnesses. Psychiatrists, however, are still far from success in curing the mental illnesses in the shape of chronic depression and suicidal tendencies. Unfortunately psychology have not been able to keep pace with the rapid advancement in the medical science. The mentally weak and cowardly who are unable to face the harsh realities of the worldly life seek to escape them and resort to the final step of kicking the bucket by ending their life. Difficulties and problems of the world may be many and even too burdensome but patience to wait for better times and faith in oneself and in the power of prayer can only provide the necessary confidence and courage to face worst tragedies of life with calmness and equanimity.

India is perhaps the one and only country in the world that has rich religious literature to provide solace and succour to the struggling souls passing through very hard times. Life cannot be without problems but what is essential for one

is to know how to face them boldly. The ancient Indian heritage contains a mine of information on how people in highly distressing circumstances did not lose their mental balance and waited patiently for better times to come with full faith in future. The *Phala Śruti* of the *Śrī Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* boldly declares “न वासुदेव भक्तानामशुभं विद्यते क्वचित्।” i.e., the devotees of Lord Vāsudeva will not be confronted with anything inauspicious. In the *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* also the Lord assures “न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति” i.e., My devotees never fall.

While the Western world is taught by some unscrupulous persons on how to take away life, the ancient Vedic literature teaches humanity how to preserve life to pursue excellence even in the worst of circumstances of life. Hariścandra did not give up truth even at the cost of his life. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* we find that Lord Śrī Rāma remained calm and unperturbed even on learning about his fourteen years of banishment and on the elopement of His own dear wife. Cynics and sceptics may say that Śrī Rāma was an *Avatāra* i.e., incarnation of God and He could afford to remain tranquil even in crisis. In the *Mahābhārata* we find *Pāṇḍavas* full of confidence and courage even after twelve years in exile and one year of *Ajñātavāsa* i.e., living incognito. At the time of the *Mahābhārata* war, Arjuna did not consider the option of suicide but talked only of *Samnyāsa* or taking up to alms by renouncing worldliness. Even here the critics may say that the *Pāṇḍavas* had the full backing of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa who was an incarnation of God.

Both in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* we find that in moments of deepest desperation comes a power that can accomplish the seemingly impossible task. One may call it providential help or the protective hands of the invisible Helper. When the sea of troubles becomes unbearable, threatening the very survival, all that one can do to save

oneself from drowning is to appeal to the Helper of the Last Resort who never fails to lend a helping hand at very crucial times. In moments of agony and crisis, even high souled people think of ending their lives. This aspect is aptly brought out in two places in the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* and in one passage in the *Mahābhārata*.

In the *Sundara Kāṇḍam*, mother Sītā confined to the *Aśoka Vana* is unable to bear the harsh threats of Rāvaṇa and thinks of ending her life. When she reaches the Śimśapā tree and ties her hair around her neck, Hanumān narrates the life of Lord Śrī Rāma and saves her from the highly depressed state of her mind. Similarly, in the *Yuddha Kāṇḍa*, Bharata who was awaiting the return of Lord Śrī Rāma in the Nandigram decides to enter the fire when he finds that the Lord has not returned at the scheduled time. Here also Āñjaneya comes to his rescue and announces in advance the arrival of the Lord in a short time. It is interesting to note that sage Vālmīki uses the very same verse beginning with the words *Kalyāṇīpada* in both the *Sundara* and the *Yuddha Kāṇḍas*. In the *Mahābhārata*, when Arjuna vows to kill Jayadratha before sunset failing which he undertakes to kill himself by entering the fire, the Lord saves him at the very last moment by coming to his rescue.

These incidents show clearly that even if difficulties and problems of life may be too burdensome, one should have full faith in God and wait patiently for better times to come in the very near future. The toughest decision of life should be reserved for the very last moment and even at that time it has to be taken after careful and due deliberation. Bhīṣma in the *Mahābhārata* says, "He who commits suicide in passion, anger or fear, goes to eternal hell because of his cowardly act." The inexorable Law of *Karma* cannot be escaped with impunity and suicide only compounds the

mistakes to leave one worse off. The *Purāṇas* or the ancient historical legends provide graphic description of the types of hell to be inhabited by the persons who commit heinous crimes. Persons who believe in the transmigration of soul should think twice before taking their life as the conditions in the after life may perhaps be far worse than the sufferings in the mundane plane. A saint asked a young man who had decided to end his life to visit the nearby hospital and then take his own decision. Seeing the plight of the people who were far worse than him, the youth changed his mind immediately and vowed to serve the old and the sickly.

With increase in the stresses and strains of the rapidly changing modern society, the suicide rate is likely to increase and not decline. One cannot expect the medical science to find any antidote to the ailments of the human mind. The only remedy for the prevention of suicides seems to lie in the arousal of religious consciousness among the depressed lot to provide them with a meaning and purpose to their unhappy lives. The psychologists who conduct research on happiness advise the depressed to take proper care of their soul. Research on faith and well-being has revealed that people who are actively religious enjoy much more peace and happiness than the atheists and agnostics. The religiously inclined minds are found to be healthier, optimistic, cheerful and compassionate than the irreligious. It also appears that those with religious faith are likely to be less prone to abuse alcohol, drugs or commit suicide. Dr. Carl Jung has said that the people with religious faith possess the most precious thing in the world. Why not encourage the depressed to cultivate this faith to enable them to possess the most precious asset of the universe ?



Legend of the three 'Da'

—Sailesh Brahmachari

In the second *Brāhmaṇa* (part of the *Vedas* treating of religious rites) of the fifth chapter of the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, there appears an episode that Prajāpati Brahmā (प्रजापति ब्रह्मा) the creator of all living beings created in the beginning three types of progeny—the gods, the demons—hostile to gods and the human beings. After their creation they were as per the order of their father living with their creator observing the vow or *Brahmacarya*. On the completion of their period of celibacy or *Brahmacarya* they approached their creator, one by one, with the prayer to receive further instructions to be followed in their life. First of all gods appeared and asked, "Father, we have completed our vow and want to know the salutary advice to be followed in our life."

Hearing them Prajāpati Brahmā simply uttered 'Da' (द) in reply and asked whether they have followed him or not.

Gods replied, "Yes, father, we have followed you. You have said, 'Dāmyata' (दाम्यत), you have asked us to keep our sense-organs under control, you have asked us to sustain the austerities of religious practices, father, are we correct?"

Brahmā replied, "That's correct."

Then appeared the human beings and put the same question to Him. In his reply to them Prajāpati Brahmā, again uttered the same letter 'Da' (द) and wanted to know if they followed him? In reply the human beings said in a chorus— "Yes father, we have followed you. You meant *Datta*" (दत्त), you have asked us to be generous and practise charity, father, are we correct?"

Brahmā replied, "Quite correct my boys. And again

when the giants put their question. Brahmā repeated the same letter 'Da' (द) and said, "Do you understand, what I mean?"

The demons replied, "We have followed you. You have advised us *Dayadhvam* (दयध्वम्) meaning thereby that we should be sympathetic and compassionate to others."

Gods are generally addicted to luxury and pleasure. In heaven they remain indulged in various types of enjoyment. There they have voluptuously beautiful nymphs with exceptional gifts in music and dancing, there they have various types of delicious and tasteful eatables with which gods remain absorbed and intoxicated all days and nights. They have no worry and anxiety for their future. That is why Prajāpati Brahmā advised them to be self-restrained and keep their sense-organs under control.

Regarding human beings, they are generally selfish by nature. They seldom look to the interest of others. They are generally actuated by selfish motives. They want to accumulate and enjoy all wealth and enjoyable things even at the cost of others' life. To this end they adopt all kinds of injustice and even perform all sorts of misdeeds. Because of this Prajāpati Brahmā advised them to be kind and sympathetic towards others.

And demons are generally malevolent, hard-hearted and cruel by nature. They have no compassion and affection. They find pleasure to ruin others completely and destroy others utterly. Therefore they were advised to be compassionate and become kind hearted.

Now in this world we come across people belonging to all the three above mentioned categories. It is not their appearance or figure that makes one god, man or demon, but it is their nature that counts, or in other words it is the natural inclinations which makes one a man, or a god, or a demon. So gods, demons and men all live in this world. Those who are god natured are gods, others who are greedy

and avid are human beings and who are cruel and destructive are demons.

Generally three diverse tendencies and demerits remain undetected to them as long as human beings remain absorbed in worldly affair. But when they proceed in the path of austere practices, they can comprehend it and try to find way to get rid of their defects.

Therefore, it is essential for all, who are practising ascetic austerities, to follow the discipline of *Brahmacarya* (ब्रह्मचर्य) and thereby ascertaining their demerits try to overcome and rectify them.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa made this very statement in the 21st couplet of the *Daivāsura Sampatti Yoga* of *Gītā* (XVIth chapter) when he says—

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥



No enemy can do the least harm to him who is armed with weapons like truthfulness, non-violence, forbearance, compassion, even-mindedness, quietude, contentment, endurance, self-abnegation etc.

—Jayadaya! Goyandka

Ignorance is the mother of all the evil and all the misery we see. Let men have light, let them be pure and spiritually strong and educated, then alone will misery cease in the world, not before.

—Swami Vivekananda

Control lingual Diarrhoea, speak measured words.

—Divine Rays

Self-Realisation

This *Ātman*, when separated from the conditioning of the body-mind-complex, reveals its true nature— infinite and immortal. That is the nature of the *Ātman*, behind the limited ego or self we all normally experience. It appears limited or small as the ego, because we view it through the limitation of this body-mind-complex, making it truncated, as it were, making it appear to be a helpless creature, a weeping wailing creature. That is the way the *Ātman* appears to you and to me. But, essentially, the *Ātman* is ever pure, ever luminous, and ever free, as Śaṅkarācārya expresses it in his commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras*. But getting into this genetic system, namely, the body, and being controlled by it, the light of the *Ātman* does not shine truly; we have to make it shine truly in its own form. That is Self-realization. Great sages have done it, and it is the birthright of all human beings, by getting their minds purified and released from the control of their sense-organs, and realizing one's infinite depth dimension. Many have realized this truth, not only in India, but also in other parts of the world, throughout the ages. In the *Gītā*, You find the Divine Incarnation, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, uttering this truth (IV. 10)—

"Freed from attachment, fear and anger, filled with the thought of Me, depending upon Me, many, purified by the *Tapas* or austerity, of spiritual knowledge, have attained to oneness with Me."

—Swami Ranganathananda

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God is All

ब्रह्मा स शिवः सेन्द्रः सोऽक्षरः परमः स्वराट्।
 स एव विष्णुः स प्राणः स कालोऽग्निः स चन्द्रमाः ॥
 स एव सर्वं यद्भूतं यच्च भव्यं सनातनम्।
 ज्ञात्वा तं मृत्युमत्येति नान्यः पन्था विमुक्तये ॥
 सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि।
 सम्पश्यन् ब्रह्म परमं याति नान्येव हेतुना ॥

(*Kaivalyopanisad* 8—10)

"He is Brahmā, He is Śiva, He is Indra, He is the imperishable God, He is Viṣṇu, He is the life-breath, He is Death, He is Fire, He is Moon. He is, indeed, all that has come to pass and all that will come to pass in future. Knowing that Eternal Lord, the *Jīva* goes beyond death. Except this, there is no other way to Liberation. He who sees God in every being, and every being in God, in other words, who sees God alone ever present everywhere, realizes the Supreme Brahma. There is no other way to His realization."

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